THE TRANSFORMERS

MAXIMUM DINOBOTS

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CHAPTER 1

CYBERTRON (SUB-SECTOR-NINE):

THIS IS HOW IT *WAS.*

DYNOBOTS—MAXIMUM MAYHEM!

MAKE IT HARD, BRUTAL, AND UGLY. THAT WAY...

...THEY'LL KNOW *EXACTLY* WHO TO BLAME!

VRZOCH

ME. *GRIMLOCK.*

SLAG.

KINDA LIKE OUR *TAG*, RIGHT? "DYNOBOTS WOZ HERE!"

HAWHF

SLUDGE.

WE CAME. WE SAW. WE *TRAMPLED.*

SKRUDD

D-DUMMM

SWOOP.

NOTHIN' LIKE A BAD REP TO PRIME THE PUMP. THEY SEE US COMIN'... JOB'S HALFWAY DONE!

SNARL.

YAK-YAK-YAK. DON'T TALK—*TRASH!*

BUNCHA BLOWHARDS!

KREEAZK

TOGETHER, THE DYNOBOTS— A SEMI-AUTONOMOUS UNIT WITHIN THE LARGER ***AUTOBOT*** WAR MACHINE.

THE MORE INSANE THE MISSION, THE DIRTIER THE DIRTY JOB...

...THE ***MORE*** WE LIKED IT.

ONE ***DECEPTICON*** ENERGON SILO DULY REQUISITIONED. UM, FOR THE CAUSE!

IS IT JUST ME? OR DO THEY ***BREAK*** EASIER THAN THEY USED TO?

AND IF, WELL, SOMETIMES WE ***SIDESTEPPED*** THE CHAIN OF COMMAND AND WENT OUR OWN SWEET WAY...

...THE ENDS JUSTIFIED THE MEANS.

OF COURSE, IT COULDN'T LAST. OUR UNIT MOTTO WAS "CRASH AND BURN."

SOMEHOW, THOUGH, I ***NEVER*** THOUGHT...

...IT'D *END* THIS WAY.

THIS...

...IS HOW IT *IS*.

NEW ZEALAND, SOUTH ISLAND
(FRANZ JOSEF GLACIER):

STRANDED ON A DISMAL SPECK OF A PLANET CALLED EARTH, THE FATE OF THE OTHERS UNCERTAIN.

THE SKYFIRE–OUR SHIP–BURIED, ALMOST BEYOND REPAIR.

TRAPPED IN A COMBAT-SHUNT VARIANT FORM ADAPTED FOR ONE SPECIFIC MISSION PROFILE, CURRENTLY ONLY ABLE TO MAKE ***COSMETIC*** CHANGES.

MARKED AS A RENEGADE, OR–WORSE–A DESERTER, BY THOSE I ONCE DEEMED COMRADES-IN-ARMS.

B-345-101

HUNTED BY ***SCORPONOK***, A ROGUE DECEPTICON WITH A PENCHANT FOR TECHNOLOGICAL PIRACY.

HE OFFERED ME LACKEY STATUS IN SOME DERANGED PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND I TURNED HIM DOWN FLAT. NOW HE WANTS ME SILENCED... PERMANENTLY.

STARING DOWN ARMAGEDDON—A DECEPTICON ARMY UNDER THE COMMAND OF ***MEGATRON*** POISED TO TAKE EARTH BY FORCE!

REALLY, HOW MUCH ***WORSE*** CAN IT GET?

(OUTSKIRTS OF) *RENO, NEVADA:*

THRILL ME.

SKYWATCH TACTICAL, THIS IS *WESTON.*

BIG TREX SKYRIDE

ACTIVATE THUNDER LIZARDS 2, 3, 4, AND 5.

IDENTIFY TARGETS, ACTUALIZE... AND *ENGAGE.*

FTHWUSH

KRSHTASHH

CHAMP

-TKK

6HR1

THAM THAM THAM THAM

T-*THERE*! FOUR POINT SIX SECONDS—*ALL* TARGETS DESTROYED. AND ZERO COLLATERAL!

SO, *AGENT RED*? WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I THINK...

...WE'VE BEEN HERE *BEFORE*.

APPARENT SUCCESS FOLLOWED BY MYSTERIOUS FAILURE. WHAT'S TO SAY THAT CYCLE WON'T REPEAT WITH THESE FOUR?

WELL, WE'VE MADE *SIGNIFICANT* IMPROVEMENTS TO THE INHIBITOR WEB. DON'T ASK ME HOW, BUT ANY SOFTWARE *KINKS* WE'VE ENCOUNTERED IN THE PAST...

...SEEM TO HAVE, WELL, IRONED THEMSELVES OUT.

STRANGELY...

...I FIND THAT *FAR* FROM REASSURING.

DALLAS, TEXAS:

WELL?

THE TEST RUN WAS A COMPLETE SUCCESS. AS FAR AS THEY'RE CONCERNED, SKYWATCH'S LITTLE COUNTER-MECH COMBAT UNIT IS READY TO BE ROLLED OUT.

THANKS TO YOU.

YES.

THANKS TO *ME*.

HOW COULD THEY KNOW THAT IT WAS I WHO PROVIDED–ALBEIT VIA YOU, *KLOSS*–THE MEANS TO COMPLETELY SUBMERGE/SUBVERT THE NEURAL NETS OF THE FOUR DYNOBOTS.

JUST AS IT IS I WHO SHALL ENSURE THAT IT ALL GOES *TERRIBLY* WRONG.

DANTE OUT.

"*I*," STRANGE HOW THAT NO LONGER SEEMS APPLICABLE. EVEN UNSHOD OF MY ARMOR I AM NO LONGER "I," I AM "*WE*."

I AM *ABRAHAM DANTE* STILL, CEO OF *EPSILON HOLDINGS*, BUT I AM ALSO...

...*SCORPONOK*.

AND "WE" SHALL VERY SOON BE THE CONTROLLING FORCE ON THIS WORLD, THE TRUE POWER BEHIND POLITICIANS AND GENERALS. AND FROM THESE HUMBLE BEGINNINGS...

...THE *MACHINATION* EMPIRE SHALL *RISE!*

NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS:

FWOOF

RIGHT...

...NOW I'M MAD.

VREEEK

FAWHOOOOM!

KARESSSH

"BETTER?"

I GUESS SO. JUST... NEEDED TO *BREAK* SOMETHING.

HH. YET ANOTHER DEAD END!

I'M STILL NO CLOSER TO FINDING MY *REAL* HEAD. THE MACHINATION HAS IT, SOMEWHERE, AND I WANT IT *BACK*.

I *KNOW* HOW YOU FEEL. BECAUSE, WELL, WE FEEL THE SAME STUFF. COMES FROM SHARING A BRAIN.

THINK ABOUT IT, *SUNSTREAKER*... HOLO-AVATARS NOTWITHSTANDING, AREN'T WE, WELL, TALKING TO *OURSELF*?

ALIEN DEATH RAY

I SUPPOSE SO. STILL HAVEN'T GOT USED TO THIS WHOLE ***HEADMASTER*** THING. PROBABLY NEVER WILL. NO OFFENSE, BUT...

...I'M A SERIAL "ME."

NONE TAKEN. AND ANYWAY, WE ***DIDN'T*** COME UP EXACTLY EMPTY.

HENDRICK

WHOOP WHOOP

WE HAVE WHATEVER WAS IN THAT ***SHADOW DRIVE*** WE FOUND BURIED IN THEIR SERVER. IF WE'RE RIGHT AND THIS WAS ANOTHER MACHINATION FRONT, THEN THERE MAY BE SOMETHING HERE WE CAN USE.

AT THE VERY LEAST IT'LL SIGNPOST OUR ***NEXT*** PORT OF CALL.

DO IT. THE SOONER ***HUNTER O'NION*** GOES THE WAY OF ALL FLESH... THE BETTER. NO OFFENSE.

NONE TAKEN.

HM. WEIRD.

YEAH. WHAT'S A ***DINOBOT***?

SOMETHING OF AN ANCIENT RELIC, BUT ACCORDING TO THIS, ***CURRENT*** MACHINATION BUSINESS.

WHICH MAKES IT...

...***OUR*** BUSINESS. DALLAS—HERE WE COME!

THE SKYFIRE:

THE SHIP IS BEYOND MY POWER TO REPAIR. NOTHING ON THIS PLANET COMES CLOSE TO WHAT I'D NEED TO GET IT SPACEWORTHY.

THANKFULLY, I KNOW SOME *OTHER* DISREPUTABLE TYPES WHO'D BE WILLING TO HELP.

FOR THE RIGHT PRICE.

I USE WHAT LAST RESERVE POWER I CAN *SQUEEZE* OUT OF THE CAPACITOR CELLS TO SEND THE SUBSPACE PULSEWAVE...

...AND THEN I *WAIT.*

MISTER DANTE, VISUAL CONFIRMS WHAT WE GOT FROM THE SATELLITE TELEMETRY.

WE *HAVE* HIM.

DALLAS, MACHINATION CENTRAL:

EXCELLENT. WE CAN *BEGIN.*

READY *TSUNAMI* UNIT.

OPEN ASSAULT IN FIVE...

...FOUR...

...THREE...

...TWO...

"...ONE...

"...GO!"

VWOH VWOH

COMPANY.

HAD TO HAPPEN. BUT IF THEY THINK I'M JUST GOING TO SIT BACK AND LET THEM TAKE ME...

...THEY REALLY *DON'T* KNOW ME AT ALL.

ON MY MARK...

...GET HIS ATTENTION!

SARZ

SARZ

SARZ

SARZ

SARZ

SARZ

RAKT

DID I—?

GROOONK

CLANG

HFN!

KAA!

VAZP

DNNNT—

H-ARRK!

IT'S—

HNT!

DUNG

HE'S...

...SO MUCH BIGGER, SO MUCH FASTER THAN WE WERE TOLD.

FOUR DOWN...

...AND THE BATTLE'S BARELY BEGUN!

QUIT MEWLING AND JUST KEEP HIM BUSY...

...WHILE I DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE!

TNK

EH?

FALLON, NEVADA:

BARRA & FIELDING

FOR YOUR FLANNEL PLAID & GINGHAM NEEDS

PAT'S FLANNE

OH...

...FRAG.

KANGG

FOR WHATEVER REASON, THEY'VE PUT ME RIGHT *BACK*...

...WHERE I *DIDN'T* WANT TO BE!

OH DEAR LORD!

...*IS* IT?

ALL'A YOUS—*GET BACK!*

Jaf's TRAVEL

RIGHT IN THE MIDST OF THESE HOT AND SCURRYING THINGS.

HOW MUCH *WORSE* CAN IT GET? I THINK...

...I'M *ABOUT* TO FIND OUT.

...LOOKS TO ME LIKE A DAMN *T-REX!*

...WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S MEAN AND TICKED OFF!

SKYWATCH DIVISIONAL OPS (RENO):

DO WE HAVE A *CONFIRMED* VISUAL?

NO, SIR. BUT EVERYTHING POINTS TO *THUNDER LIZARD 1.*

ALL THIS TIME, NOTHING, THEN RIGHT ON OUR DOORSTEP.

HOW... CONVENIENT.

SIR?

NV

NEVER MIND. HOWEVER IT GOT THERE, IT'S *OUR* PROBLEM.

I WANT A COMPLETE COMMUNICATIONS BLACKOUT. CUT PHONE LINES AND DISABLE ALL LOCAL CELL NETWORKS.

NO ONE IN—NO ONE OUT. ANYTHING AIRBORNE, EITHER FORCE IT DOWN... OR *SHOOT* IT DOWN. WHATEVER IT TAKES, CONTAIN THIS.

SEAL FALLON OFF.

WESTON—STATUS.

HH-HH. THUNDER LIZARDS 2, 3, 4, AND 5...

"...ARE *EN ROUTE.*"

"AND GOD HELP ANYONE CAUGHT BETWEEN THEM!"

DALLAS:

WE HAVE A *VISITOR.*

SO I SEE.

HOW'D HE *FIND* US?

IT DOESN'T MATTER. LET HIM COME. THE REALIZATION OF MANY, MANY YEARS' PLANNING IS NOW WITHIN MY GRASP.

BEFORE I TRUNCATE HIS MISERABLE EXISTENCE, *HOT ROD* SHALL BEAR WITNESS TO AN EVOLUTION—THE *DOOM* OF THE DYNOBOTS...

...AND THE *DAWN* OF THE *HEADMASTERS!*

CHAPTER 2

DALLAS, TEXAS:

CH-FANNG

HNRHG!

COUNT YOURSELF LUCKY, *HOT ROD.*

IF I'D WANTED YOU DEAD, YOU'D HAVE LONG AGO MET YOUR CREATOR.

THIS...

...IS JUST *PLAY.*

CLUNNG

FHT-EH...

THE TRUTH OF IT IS, I WANT YOU TO SEE THE FULL SCOPE OF WHAT IS EVEN NOW UNFOLDING IN ALL ITS TERRIBLE GLORY, THE MAGNIFICENT BREADTH OF *MY* VISION. AND FOR THAT I NEED YOU BROKEN, TAMED...

...AND HOBBLED.

EEAAA!

RENK

BRING HIM.

SIR!

I ADMIRE YOUR *TENACITY*, HOT ROD, I REALLY DO.

GIVEN THAT OUR INITIAL STRIKE AGAINST YOU WAS PURELY RANDOM, AN EXERCISE*, YOU'VE STUBBORNLY STUCK AT THIS, DETERMINED TO SETTLE THE SCORE OR PERHAPS RESCUE POOR SUNSTREAKER.

YOU EVEN FOUND YOUR WAY *HERE*! YOU REALLY *MUST* TELL ME HOW.

*IN TRANSFORMERS: DEVASTATION

BUT LATER. THE CURTAIN IS ABOUT TO RISE ON THE FALL OF THE *DYNOBOTS*...

...AND THE RISE OF THE *MACHINATION* EMPIRE!

FALLON, NEVADA:

SNROARR

IS THIS IT, SCORPONOK? IS THIS WHAT YOU WANTED?

THE BEAST UNLEASHED! A VERY PUBLIC MONSTER! WELL, FINE. I'M HAPPY TO OBLIGE!

WHATEVER IT IS YOU GOT WAITING FOR ME...

...BRING IT ON!

IT'S EASY TO FORGET THAT BEHIND *GRIMLOCK'S* ANGRY WHITE NOISE LURKS A BRAIN. *HE UNDERSTANDS.*

WHICH IS MORE THAN *I* CAN SAY. WHAT *IS* THE MACHINATION?

IT IS THE CULMINATION OF A PLAN CONCEIVED LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY. ON A PLANET CALLED ***NEBULOS***, IF YOU'RE INTERESTED.

I'M NOT.

HN. THEN JUST WATCH...

...AND *LEARN!*

(WEST OF) NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE:

TELL ME SOMETHING, IF ALL HELL'S ABOUT TO BREAK LOOSE IN FALLON...

...WHY ARE WE HEADED TO *DALLAS*?

SHOULDN'T WE BE *DOING* SOMETHING ABOUT THESE DINOBOTS?

IT'S DYNOBOTS. *D-Y—*

DINOBOTS. LIKE DINOSAURS. YOU SEE THAT, RIGHT? WORK WITH ME HERE, *SUNSTREAKER*.

ALIEN DEATH RAY

-SIGH- DALLAS IS WHERE THE MACHINATION HUB IS. LIKELY, IT'S WHERE MY HEAD IS, TOO. MY *ACTUAL* HEAD!

AND SCORPONOK'S WHOLE PLAN REVOLVES AROUND THE UNLIMITED ACCESS IT GRANTS HIM TO HIS ENTIRE *HEADMASTER* ARMY.

160 MPH

"TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE," ISN'T THAT THE EXPRESSION? GET THE HEAD—STOP THE CARNAGE! ANYTHING ELSE, I'M AFRAID...

...IS *COLLATERAL DAMAGE!*

FALLON:

RISSOLE

911

HOWOWRR!

CAN'T BE!

IT *IS*!

THE DYNOBOTS!

LOOSEN THE NEURAL DAMPERS BY THIRTY PERCENT. LET SOME OF WHO THEY WERE COME TO THE SURFACE.

I WANT THEM AT THEIR SAVAGE ***BEST***!

ZZARK

SO. SCORPONOK LIED. YOU *DID* SURVIVE!

SLAG?

SNARL?

SLUDGE?

SWOOP-UUH!

RZOT

NO ONE HOME, EH? WELL, WHATEVER'S BEEN DONE TO YOU CAN BE ***UN***DONE. YOU'RE ALIVE, THAT'S ***ALL*** THAT MATTERS!

THIS IS SERGEANT DONNELLY OF THE CHURCHILL COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, REQUESTING AN ***URGENT*** 'PATCH TO HOMELAND SECURITY!

HELLO? *ANYONE?*

NEVADA

I'M SORRY, SIR. NATIONAL EMERGENCY. PLEASE TURN YOUR VEHICLE AROUND ***NOW***!

Welcome to Fallon
The Oasis of Nevada

RENO, NEVADA (SKYWATCH):

-:HUFF:- -:HUFF:- THUNDER-LIZARD-1 HAS BEEN ENGAGED, SIR. BUT THERE'S THAT INEXPLICABLE DROP IN NEURAL NET COHESION.

"INEXPLICABLE," YEAH. AND FALLON?

SEALED OFF—TIGHT AS A DRUM. NOTHING IN, NOTHING OUT!

CELLULAR NETWORKS ALL DISABLED. LANDLINES, TOO. AND WE'RE -:HUFF:- ENFORCING A FORTY-MILE RADIUS NO-FLY ZONE.

GOOD, KEEP ME UPDATED AT REGULAR INTERVALS.

UM, *AGENT RED*—SIR... WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

TO DO SOMETHING I *SHOULD* HAVE DONE THE MOMENT WE LOST THUNDER-LIZARD-1.

IAN FLEMING PUT IT THIS WAY: ONCE IS HAPPENSTANCE. TWICE IS COINCIDENCE. THREE TIMES...

"...IS *ENEMY ACTION!*"

FALLON:

DON'T... WANT... TO... *FIGHT*... YOU!

BUT...

LODGE

KRASHHK

...YOU'RE *NOT* LEAVING ME MUCH CHOICE!

CHUTT

Comfi LODGE

YOU... HAVE TO... REMEMBER...

...WHO YOU ARE. WHAT WE WERE!

DARK STONE

WHATEVER I'VE DONE IN THE PAST, HOWEVER MUCH I'M TO BLAME FOR THIS MESS...

...FIRST AND FOREMOST WE'RE DYNOBOTS. WE WATCH EACH OTHER'S BACK, WE STICK TOGETHER THROUGH THICK AND THIN, AND NO ONE EVER...

TWHUD

THWAM

...TELLS US WHAT TO DO!

SLAM

SLAG... DON'T.

FOCUS. GO BACK TO THE MOMENT WE FIRST MET ON CYBERTRON. I CAN SEE IT *SO* CLEARLY: THAT BARRACKS, THAT BRIG...

...YOU AND ME, TRYING TO FIGURE WHO'D GONE FURTHEST UP THE CHAIN OF COMMAND IN TERMS OF WHO WE'D TICKED OFF AND HOW BAD.

AS I RECALL, YOU TRUMPED MY FIELD COMMANDER WITH A VICE ADMIRAL. YOU SHOT HIM IN THE BACK TO CONVINCE THE DULLARD HIS UNIT HAD BEEN OUTFLANKED AND A FORWARD ATTACK WAS THE ONLY OPTION. RIGHT THERE AND THEN...

...I KNEW WE SAW THINGS WITH THE EXACT SAME SIMPLE *CLARITY*.

REMEM—

BAAAH!

VAARK

OHH... *FR—*

THAWHOOOM!

TELL ME WE CLEARED GRID 17-WEST!

FAR AS WE CAN TELL, CHIEF, BUT YOU KNOW HOW FOLKS HERE ARE. SOME OF 'EM WOULD SOONER AMPUTATE ONE'A THEIR OWN LIMBS WITH A NAIL FILE...

"...THAN *LEAVE* THEIR HOMES AND BUSINESSES!"

PERFECT. A VERITABLE CAULDRON! AND FROM SCORCHED EARTH SHALL COME A *NEW* ORDER.

DISAPPOINTED.

OH? HOW SO?

ALWAYS KNEW YOU WERE MERCENARY AND CUTTHROAT, SCORPONOK, BUT A *SADIST*?

MM-HM.

YOU SEEK TO PROVOKE ME, PROMPT SOME UNGUARDED REVELATION. BUT THE THING IS, HOT ROD...

...I FULLY INTEND TO TELL YOU *EVERYTHING*.

WHEN I AM DONE, SKYWATCH WILL BE *REVEALED* AS THE INSTIGATOR OF THIS DEVASTATION AND ACCORDINGLY REBUKED.

"MY *HEADMASTERS*, BY THAT POINT, WILL HAVE RESTORED ORDER TO CHAOS, DEMONSTRABLY ENDING THE THREAT POSED BY THE DYNOBOTS. AND WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE..."

80

...THE LUCRATIVE GOVERNMENT CONTRACT TO POLICE THE SKIES AND DEFEND EARTH FROM EXTRATERRESTRIAL THREATS WILL PASS TO *ME*. OR AT LEAST MY DUMMY COMPANY, *EPSILON HOLDINGS*.

AND FROM THERE...

EPSILON HOLDINGS

"...THE *SKY* IS WELL AND TRULY THE LIMIT."

NEW ZEALAND, SOUTH ISLAND
(FRANZ JOSEF GLACIER):

SHUMMMM

HE'S NOT HERE.

WHAT? HE MUST BE. THESE ARE THE EXACT COORDINATES. THAT'S THE *SKYFIRE*.

BUT *NO* GRIMLOCK.

WE'VE COME A LONG WAY AND I DO NOT INTEND TO LEAVE EMPTY-HANDED.

FIND HIM!

DALLAS:

SIR, THE *TRIDENT BATTALION* IS IN FINAL APPROACH.

TELL THEM TO *HOLD* POSITION AND AWAIT MY COMMAND. I FIND MYSELF SOMEWHAT *INTRIGUED*.

"WHATEVER I'VE DONE," THAT'S WHAT GRIMLOCK SAID, "HOWEVER MUCH I'M TO BLAME..."

RAISE THE AWARENESS THRESHOLD BY FIFTY PERCENT. LET THEM ACCESS THEIR *MEMORY* CACHE.

SOMETHING TELLS ME THE SIMMERING ANIMOSITY WE'VE TOILED SO HARD TO INDUCE ARTIFICIALLY...

"...HAS BEEN THERE ALL THE TIME!"

SOMEONE *HELP!* I'M ->HAKK<- COOKIN' IN MAH OWN DINER!

HELLO? *HELLO?* ->KK-HUK<-

JIMBOB'S DINER

-KHAAFH-

FN.

DUMB ANIMALS.

DINER

FNORH!

WHAT DID YOU *DO*?

VZAAP

TO *US*?

YOUR *FELLOW* DYNOBOTS!

SO YOU REMEMBER.

WHAT DID I DO? I MADE SURE WE *WON*, AT *ANY* COST.

WE CAME TO THIS MISBEGOTTEN PLANET LOOKING FOR PAYBACK. THAT ONE-EYED FREAK *SHOCKWAVE* HAD IT COMING... BIG TIME! ONLY...

...IT DIDN'T *QUITE* WORK OUT THAT WAY.

"DOWNED, STASIS-LOCKED, BUT NEVER, EVER BEATEN. IN THIS CASE..."

"...A PRESET BARRAGE FROM THE SKYFIRE'S MAIN WEAPONS ARRAY—THE TARGET: A RESERVOIR OF UNSTABLE SUBTERRANEAN ***MAGMA***."

ANY ***ONE*** OF YOU WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME THING.

EXCEPT ***WE*** WOULD HAVE BEEN UPFRONT ABOUT IT. YOU DID IT BEHIND OUR BACKS, TOOK THE DECISION ***OUT*** OF OUR HANDS. AT THAT EXACT INSTANT...

...WE ***STOPPED*** BEING A TEAM.

FUNNY.

WHAT IS?

TO HEAR THAT FROM ***YOU***, SLAG. YOU WHO FOUGHT SO HARD TO STRESS, TIME AND TIME AGAIN, THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT WE WEREN'T—A TEAM.

WHAT WAS IT YOU USED TO SAY? OH YEAH, WE PUT THE "UN-" INTO "UNIT."

REMEMBER WHEN WE FIRST HIT ON THE IDEA OF THE DYNOBOTS, YOU AND I? YOU SAID...

MBOB'S DINER

Rail-y Good Grub!

...THERE'S ONLY ONE RULE: THERE *ARE* NO RULES!

NO CONVENTIONS, NO PRECEDENTS, NO COMPANY LINE. WHAT I *DID*, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, WAS SO COMPLETELY AND UTTERLY "US."

NOW IF YOU'LL *EXCUSE* ME...

...I FEEL CURIOUSLY *OBLIGATED* TO PUT THIS LACKLUSTER LIFEFORM OUT OF HARM'S WAY.

OH WELL. YOU WIN SOME. YOU LOSE SOME.

SEND IN THE HEADMASTERS!

HEY—*STOP!* STOP OR WE'LL—

FHADAM

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH:

IT'S HIGH TIME...

...YOU AND I...

...HAD A *SERIOUS* TALK.

NICK 08

CHAPTER 3

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH:

SKYWATCH CONTAINMENT FACILITY:

DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT'S BEEN DONE TO YOU, *SHOCKWAVE*?

OF COURSE.

YOU HAVE INTERSPLICED A POWERFUL EXPLOSIVE CHARGE WITHIN MY NEURAL MASS, DESIGNED TO DETONATE AFTER TWENTY-FOUR OF YOUR TIME-UNITS (HOURS) HAVE ELAPSED UNLESS A ***RESET*** CODE, KNOWN ***ONLY*** TO YOU, IS TRANSMITTED.

YOU DO THIS BECAUSE YOUR PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO ***LEASH*** OTHER BEINGS LIKE MYSELF HAVE MET WITH DISMAL AND REPEATED FAILURE.

*AND YOU WISH **ME** TO CLEAN UP YOUR MESS.*

EXACTLY.

YOU HAVE THE FIRST TWENTY-FOUR-HOUR WINDOW TO LOCATE AND NEUTRALIZE ***SEEKERS*** 1 AND 2 AND ***THUNDER-LIZARDS*** 1 TO 5.

RAVAGE. LASERBEAK.

GRIMLOCK, SNARL, SWOOP, SLUDGE, AND *SLAG.*

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. ***AGENT RED,*** DO YOU HAVE ANY CONCEPTION...

*...OF HOW MUCH **DAMAGE** I COULD DO TO THIS INSUBSTANTIAL WORLD IN THAT TIME?*

YOU DON'T THINK—

—HE WOULDN'T. NOT IF IT MEANT—

—*WOULD* HE?

I—

*SKYWATCH CENTRAL, THIS IS TACTICAL UNIT: BCRUX. WE ARE **UNDER ATTACK!***

FALLON, NEVADA:

MULTIPLE VEHICULAR ASSAILANTS... ALL *IDENTICAL!* WE—

VHOMP

-›EHT‹- —CAN'T STOP THEM!

"SIR, JUST IN FROM OUR ON-SITE OBSERVERS. ALL **HEADMASTER** BATTALIONS HAVE PENETRATED FALLON CITY LIMITS."

DALLAS, TEXAS (*MACHINATION* HUB):

YES. SO I SEE. CONVERGE ON GRID T-LATERAL-6.

HAVE THEM TARGET *GRIMLOCK* ALONE.

I'M INTERESTED TO SEE, GIVEN RECENT DISCLOSURES, JUST HOW *WILLING* THE OTHERS WILL BE TO LEAP TO HIS DEFENSE.

DONE.

THAT SAID, HOWEVER IT GOES...

"...NO ONE GETS OUT ALIVE."

WE HAVE TO GET *OFF* THIS PLANET.

FALLON (GRID T-LATERAL-6):

THE *SKYFIRE* IS INTACT BUT BADLY DAMAGED, IN NEED OF PARTS AND EXPERTISE I DON'T HAVE.

AT LEAST... NOT ***YET.***

UNTIL THEN, WE NEED TO FIND SOMEWHERE TO LAY LOW, TAKE STOCK.

THE HUMANS WILL BE BACK WITH BIGGER WEAPONS. AND ***SCORPONOK***, WELL, HE'S NOT DONE WITH ME... US... YET.

WELL? YOU JUST GOING TO *STAND* THERE?

SNARL...

...SLUDGE...

...SLAG...

...SWOOP...

...TALK TO ME.

TIME WAS, GRIMLOCK...

...YOU TALKED AND WE LISTENED.

BUT THAT'S CHANGED. EVERYTHING'S DIFFERENT NOW—A WHOLE NEW WORLD.

IT'S *US*, SWOOP, AGAINST THE WORLD. SAME AS ALWAYS!

NO.

I CAN'T SPEAK FOR THE OTHERS, BUT I CAN'T FORGIVE OR FORGET WHAT YOU DID—HOWEVER MUCH IT MIGHT BE IN KEEPING WITH THE GENERAL ANARCHIC ETHOS OF BEING A *DYNOBOT*.

I'M... NOT SOMEONE WHO PLAYS WELL WITH OTHERS. TRUST COMES HARD FOR ME.

AND YET SOMEHOW YOU PULLED ME IN... MADE ME A PART OF SOMETHING I COULD *BELIEVE* IN. AND THEN, ON A WHIM...

"...YOU BLEW IT ALL APART."

IT WAS JUST A GAME FOR YOU, WASN'T IT? WIN AT ALL COSTS, *ANY* COST. THE REST OF US WERE JUST A MEANS TO THAT END, ULTIMATELY EXPENDABLE.

SAY WE GET OFF THIS PLANET. WHAT THEN? CAN YOU HONESTLY TELL ME THERE'S ONE SINGLE, SOLITARY BRIDGE...

...THAT HASN'T BEEN *BURNED!*

YEAH, I THOUGHT SO.

I'M BETTER OFF ALONE.

SWOOP, WAIT!

WE'RE...

...A TEAM.

DON'T—

FINE.

FRAG YOU ALL. I DON'T NEED YOU. I *NEVER* NEEDED YOU. FROM NOW ON, IT'S ALL ABOUT ME... GRIML—

—OHK!

THR-D-D-D-D-DOW

Y—Y—

—YOU LOT.

BACK FOR MORE, EH?

BACK TO FINISH...

...WHAT WE STARTED.

GOOD. I'M IN THE MOOD...

...TO *EVISCERATE* EN MASSE!

DALLAS:

SO...

...YOUR HEADMASTERS SAVE THE DAY, SKYWATCH IS EXPOSED AND DISCREDITED, AND YOUR DUMMY COMPANY, ***EPSILON HOLDINGS*** PICKS UP THE GOVERNMENT CONTRACT TO POLICE THE SKIES.

ALL SOUNDS RATHER... MUNDANE.

THE HOSTILE TAKEOVER IS MERELY THE FIRST STAGE OF MY STRATEGY, ***HOT ROD.*** AS WELL YOU KNOW!

FROM HERE... I SHALL INTEGRATE MYSELF INTO THE SECRET POWER STRUCTURE OF THIS NATION AND THEN OTHERS. BEFORE THEY KNOW IT...

...I WILL BE STEERING THE ENTIRE COURSE OF PLANET EARTH.

AND SO THE ***MACHINATION EMPIRE*** WILL RISE!

I WOULD CAUTION YOU, HOT ROD, TO MAINTAIN A DEGREE OF ***AWE*** IN ANY FUTURE VOCALIZATIONS. FOR WHEN YOU CEASE TO BE IMPRESSED...

...YOU CEASE TO ***BE.***

FALLON:

SKRRKT

THWOFT

VAPP

VAPP

VAPP

VAPP

VAPP

GRR... NAWWR

CHRANK

SERIOUSLY... DID YOU THINK WE'D JUST STAND THERE AND LET YOU- WHATEVER YOU ARE-TAKE OUT THE BIG "G"?

ALL YOU'VE DONE IS REMIND US THAT, DEEP DOWN...

KA-SHOK

...FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE...

SHUNK

...WE'RE *DYNOBOTS!*

SWOOP!

VT-TT-TOOM

YOU CAME BACK.

HN. WHERE WOULD I GO?

JUST... JUST UNDERSTAND. WHATEVER HAPPENS NEXT WILL BE ON *MY* TERMS.

ER...

...I THINK I CAN *GUESS* WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

EXECUTE.

THE *I-20*, DALLAS:

THERE IT IS.

IT'S *BIG*, SUNSTREAKER, BIGGER THAN ANYTHING WE'VE SEEN IN OUR COUNTRYWIDE TOUR OF SUSPECTED MACHINATION PLANTS AND FACILITIES.

ONE THING'S FOR SURE...

...WE NEED A PLAN.

HEY! WHAT'S THIS? WHERE ARE WE GOING?

HUNTER!

NO NEED TO SHOUT, *SUNSTREAKER*. I MEAN—WE SHARE THE SAME HEAD!

YOU'RE ALL FIRED UP, I GET THAT, YOU WANT YOUR HEAD BACK—YOUR *REAL* HEAD—BUT WE CAN'T JUST ROLL IN THERE AND START SHOOTING AT THINGS. SO I...

...AM CALLING A *TIME OUT*.

SORRY, BUT THIS SITUATION CALLS FOR A LEVEL HEAD, AND RIGHT NOW, IN THIS EQUATION...

...I AM IT.

PHEE-*EW*! THAT'S BETTER. NOT THAT I MIND BEING ONE HALF OF A WHOLE, BUT IT'S GOOD TO HAVE SOME FULL ON ***HUNTER O'NION*** TIME NOW AND AGAIN.

BE RIGHT BACK.

WE BARELY ESCAPED FROM SCORPONOK LAST TIME* AND I FOR ONE HAVE NO DESIRE FOR A RETURN BOUT. SO WE NEED TO FIND A WAY IN—AND *OUT*—WITH MINIMUM EXPOSURE.

AND THAT MEANS, FOR NOW AT LEAST...

*IN *TRANSFORMERS: DEVASTATION* #6

...WE *WATCH*.

AND *WAIT*.

FALLON:

DYNOBOTS... *CHAAAARGE!*

I WAS WRONG, GRIMLOCK. BETTER IN BATTLE WITH WARRIOR BROTHERS THAN IN QUIET SOLITUDE.

I PULLED US TOGETHER FOR ALL THE ***WRONG*** REASONS. BUT AT LEAST WE'RE TOGETHER...

...ONE LAST TIME.

VT-TOOOM

VT-TOOOOM

WHO—?

OH. ABOUT TIME!

GRIMLOCK?

THOSE "PARTS," THAT "EXPERTISE." TELL ME YOU *DIDN'T!*

DESPERATE TIMES, SLAG...

"...CALL FOR **DESPERATE** ALLIES!"

DOUBLECROSS, GROTUSQUE—SHOW THESE CYBERTRONIAN WANNABES HOW ***REAL*** IT GETS! THINGS...

...ARE ABOUT TO GET ***UGLY***!

FOR YOU, ***REPUGNUS***, I'LL SKIP RIGHT TO THE ***PUNCH LINE***.

AND I'LL GET THE OPPOSITION WELL AND TRULY ***WARMED UP***!

FOOSHT

ALL I'LL SAY, GRIMLOCK, IS WHATEVER IT IS YOU'VE *GOT* FOR US...

...IT'D BETTER BE GOOD!

YEAH. IT'S NOT LIKE WE DO THIS STUFF FOR *FUN*!

OKAY, WE *DO*, BUT THERE'S A PRINCIPLE HERE, YOU UNDERSTAND.

RAAK

GNESH

WHAT HE SAID. JUST 'CAUSE WE'RE *OUTCASTS*, LIKE YOU...

...DOESN'T MAKE US A SOFT TOUCH!

CRRIIT

PERFECT END TO A PERFECT DAY. WE CAN'T EVEN DIE RIGHT.

YOU JUST GOING TO STAND THERE GRIZZLING, SNARL, OR ARE YOU GOING TO GET STUCK IN?

WHAT DID HE MEAN, "OUTCASTS"?

ENOUGH! DYNOBOTS...

...SHOW THESE SO-CALLED *MONSTERBOTS* HOW IT'S *REALLY* DONE!

SHOK

AND SOMEHOW, EVEN AFTER ALL THAT'S HAPPENED...

"...WE STILL DO."

THEY'RE NOT PAYING ME ENOUGH FOR THIS!

HELL NO!

R-RIGHT. I SIGNED UP FOR A TURKEY SHOOT.

DALLAS:

HAHAHAHAHA!

THE BEST LAID PLANS, EH SCORPONOK?

THOSE DYNOBOTS! LAST GROUP IN ALL CREATION ANYONE'D HANG A STRATEGY ON! EXCEPT *YOU*... APPARENTLY.

YOU TWO, TAKE HIM OUT...

...AND HAVE HIM *SHOT*.

GENIUS! *GENIUS*! HA-HAHAHA!

HE'S LOST IT.

HA.

HA.

AFTER THE BEATING THE BOSS METED OUT, ARE YOU SURPRISED?

THIS'LL BE A MERCY KILLING.

IS IT ME OR IS IT GETTING HOT IN HERE?

HA.

WHAT THE FR—

FHWOMP

KK-HH. *FLAME OUT* DID THE JOB, BUT...

...=*UHH*= I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE FAST. NOT ON THIS LEG.

CAN'T CHANGE. INTERNAL COMM. UNIT'S BEEN DISABLED. AND IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE SCORPONOK GETS WISE TO WHAT I JUST DID. FACE IT, HOT ROD...

"...YOU NEED A MIRACLE!"

PORTLAND, OREGON:

SIGNAL CARRIER CODE CONFIRMED. IDENTITY/SOURCE...

...**SOUNDWAVE.**

JAMES ROBERTS

KNEEDEEP IN THE HOOPLA

MARCUS BENHAZAR

TO BE CONTINUED...

PORTLAND, OREGON:

CHAPTER 4

SKRAASH

HUMAN! Y-YOU... HAVE... ...SOMETHING W-WE WANT...

HOLEE—

L-LASERBEAK...

...APP-ROPRIATE!

ZZWOOF

JIMMY!

JIMMY!

WOW.

MOUNT ST. HELENS, WASHINGTON (LATER):

Y-YOU ARE... *FREE.* BUT...

...NOW—WHAT?

THAT, *RAVAGE*, I... DO NOT KNOW.

MY LAST... RESERVES OF POWER... ALMOST GONE. STILL... T-T-TRAPPED IN SHUNT FORM...

...CAN BARELY... KEEP... BLOCKING SIGNAL TO YOUR *IMPLANTS.* WE—

—NEED A *SPECIALIST.*

ESPECIALLY AS, I'D POSTULATE, IT WAS A WEAPON OF *MY* DESIGN THAT CONSIGNED YOU TO THIS SORRY STATE.

SH-*SHOCKWAVE?* IS THAT *YOU?*

IT IS.

ORDER RAVAGE AND LASERBEAK TO STAND DOWN. I HAVE NO WISH TO HURT THEM... OR YOU. IN FACT, *SOUNDWAVE,* I BELIEVE...

...WE CAN *HELP* EACH OTHER.

DALLAS, TEXAS:

EHN...

UHN...

NEED A HAND?

OR... MAYBE A *FOOT*?!

WH—?

NO!

RELAX, *HOT ROD*...

...I'M THE *REAL* DEAL.

WELL, MORE OR LESS.

VZAT

VZEAT

ANYWAY, THANKS. YOU'VE GIVEN ME THE *OPENING* I WAS LOOKING FOR.

FIND YOURSELF SOMEWHERE TO HOLE UP. I'LL BE BACK FOR YOU ONCE I... EH?

WAIT.

YOU CAN'T DO THIS ALONE. IT'S NOT JUST *SCORPONOK*—HE'S GOT AN *ARMY* IN THERE!

I KNOW. THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT. ONCE I'M IN... IT'S A CASE OF *LOST IN A CROWD*.

DAMMIT. *LISTEN* TO ME, *SUNSTREAKER*. WE NEED HELP... HEAVY-HITTERS.

FINE. WHATEVER. CALL IN THE CAVALRY.

BUT—HERE, NOW—I'M GOING TO FIND MY HEAD. MY *REAL* HEAD!

THAT *ARROGANT, IGNORANT, INSUFFERABLE...*

AH. WHAT'S THE POINT?

WE *NEED* MUSCLE—RAW, POTENT, PILEDRIVING POWER.

AND I KNOW JUST WHERE TO *GET* IT.

I KNOW, I *KNOW*. OLD HABITS AND ALL THAT!

BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, *HUNTER*, I'VE HAD *ENOUGH* OF WAITING, *ENOUGH* OF CAUTION.

EACH MOMENT I DELAY, MY MIND IS PILLAGED AND PULLED IN A *HUNDRED* DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS AT ONCE, AND, WELL...

...A LITTLE BIT MORE OF ME *DIES*.

60,000 FEET ABOVE NORTHEASTERN NEBRASKA:

OKAY. *GIVE!*

HAND OVER WHATEVER YOU THOUGHT ***MERITED*** OUR LONG TREK TO THIS BLEAK ROCK... OH, ***AND*** PARTICIPATION IN A BATTLE NOT OF OUR INSTIGATION, DURING WHICH—LET'S FACE IT—WE HAULED YOUR SAD, SORRY ***DYNOBOT*** DERRIERES ***OUT*** OF THE FIRE!

GRIMLOCK, ***GRIMLOCK...***

...THIS STRONG, SILENT ROUTINE IS ***NOT*** ENCOURAGING.

WHAT CAN I SAY? YOU'LL GET WHAT I PROMISED YOU, ***REPUGNUS***, JUST... NOT YET.

OH, NOW SEE, YOU GOT TO DO BETTER THAN THAT. ME, I'M WILLING TO TAKE A LOT ON TRUST, BUT ***DOUBLECROSS*** AND ***GROTUSQUE*** HERE...

...THEY LACK MY FINER, INTUITIVE INSTINCTS. WHICH IS TO SAY...

...THEY MAY JUST RIP YOUR HEAD ***OFF*** AND SEE WHAT THEY CAN TIP OUT.

TRUTH IS WE DON'T KNOW ***WHAT*** WE GOT.

JUST... ***EVERYTHING*** THAT WAS IN SHOCKWAVE'S ONBOARD DATA-CACHE BEFORE WE BLEW HIS SHIP OUT OF THE SKY!

O-KAAY. THAT'S CERTAINLY A STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF RECOMPENSE. DATA'S ENCODED, RIGHT?

RIGHT. BUT—

—UF—

—I'M GUESSING SOMEONE WITH YOUR, AH, CONNECTIONS COULD GET IT ***DE***CODED, FIND OUT ***WHAT*** SHOCKWAVE WAS DOING ON EARTH IN THE FIRST PLACE...

...AND ***WHY*** THIS PLANET ONCE HAD STRATOSPHERICALLY HIGH LEVELS OF ***ENERGON***.

WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT IN THERE?

DON'T CARE, SLUDGE. HAVIN' DEALINGS WITH THESE THREE IS SO WRONG ON SO MANY LEVELS, THE DETAILS ARE MOSTLY IRRELEVANT.

YEAH, ***SWOOP***. IT'S ANOTHER SURE SIGN...

...OF JUST HOW ***FAR*** WE'VE FALLEN.

SNARL?

"WE'RE *OUTCASTS*, LIKE YOU." THAT'S WHAT REPUGNUS SAID, VERBATIM. "LIKE *YOU*."

GRIMLOCK'S BEEN PRETTY CAGEY ABOUT OUR OFFICIAL STATUS, WHICH MAKES ME THINK OUR ORIGINAL OP—ALL THAT TIME AGO—WASN'T AS OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED AS WE WERE TOLD.

WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST TIME.

TRUE, BUT MUCH AS I ENJOY BUSTIN' '*CON* HEADS, EVERYTHING I DID WAS SO ONE DAY I COULD GO *BACK* TO THE SIMPLE LIFE I ONCE LED. BUT, SEE, I GOT A BAD FEELIN'...

...THERE AIN'T NO GOIN' BACK. NOT *EVER*.

SORTED. WE HAVE OURSELVES AN *EXTENSION* OF THIS ALLIANCE.

WE'LL HAVE *THE SKYFIRE* UP AND RUNNING IN NO TIME, AND WHATEVER ONGOING THREAT SCORPONOK MIGHT HAVE POSED WILL SOON BE NULL AND—

—WHAT?

DALLAS (MACHINATION CENTRAL):

RIGHT. HERE GOES. HOPE I CAN BOOST MY INTERNAL COMM. SYSTEM ENOUGH...

...TO GET A DISTRESS SIGNAL TO THE *RIGHT* AUDIO RECEPTORS.

"*BEFORE* I'M DISCOVERED."

WITHOUT BURN-*NNN*-ING OUT EVERY CIRCUIT MEMBRANE IN MY BODY!

IS *ANYONE* RECEIVING ME?

"...ANYONE..."

"...ANYONE..."

"...ANYONE..."

"...ANYONE..."

MACHINATION CENTRAL (SUB-LEVEL):

IT'S *CLOSE.*

CAN YOU FEEL IT, HUNTER? IT'S RIGHT HERE.

CLOSE ENOUGH...

...TO *TOUCH.*

OH...

THERE. DID YOU THINK I WOULDN'T KNOW THE *MOMENT* YOU SET FOOT IN MY LAIR? EVERY ONE OF MY *HEADMASTERS* BEARS ITS OWN, UNIQUE RECOGNITION STAMP.

TRULY, YOUR *HUBRIS* KNOWS NO LIMIT.

YOU'RE JUST ONE MORE LOOSE END...

...TIED... UP...

...NO!

NO!

WHERE DO YOU *THINK* YOU CAN HIDE, HUMAN?

HOW LONG DO YOU THINK YOU'LL *LAST*...

...ALONE... IN TERRIBLE, UNSPEAKABLE PAIN... NURSING A *HOLE* IN THE VERY FABRIC OF WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL A SOUL?

LET IT *END*—NOW.

I PROMISE YOU, IT WILL ALL BE OVER... BEFORE YOU EVEN *KNOW* IT!

VRRIP

LORD SCORPONOK...

...WE HAVE A PROBLEM.

WHAT? WHAT COULD BE SO PRESSING, *DRAKE*, THAT YOU CANNOT SIMPLY *DEAL* WITH IT?

A CYBERTRONIAN VESSEL HAS JUST APPEARED ON OUR LONG-RANGE SCANNERS...

"...INBOUND AND CLOSING *FAST*!"

ACTIVATE *ALL* GROUND DEFENSES, WHEN THEY'RE IN RANGE...

"...FIRE AT WILL!"

ALL HEADMASTER UNITS *RETURN* TO INNER COMPOUND IMMEDIATELY. DEFENSIVE MODEL: SYMMETRY-ZERO-FIVE.

NOW. LET'S JUST HOPE...

"...THIS ISN'T *ANOTHER* EPIC/HEROIC TILT."

TELL ME AGAIN, GRIMLOCK...

...WHY EVEN *BOTHER* ABOUT SCORPONOK? WHATEVER HE'S UP TO HERE... I PLAINLY *DON'T* CARE!

SCORPONOK *MADE* IT OUR FIGHT WHEN HE GOT IN YOUR HEADS, TURNED YOU *AGAINST* ME. IT'S THE DYNOBOT WAY.

NO.

YEAH. IT'S NOT OUR FIGHT. JUST GIVE 'PUG 'N' HIS THUGS WHATEVER YOU PROMISED THEM, AND WE CAN BE AWAY AND *GONE*.

IT'S *YOUR* WAY. IT'S ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT YOU, WE... WERE JUST ALONG FOR THE RIDE. HERE, NOW—THIS IS ABOUT *YOUR* WOUNDED PRIDE.

TELL ME, GRIMLOCK, DOES GETTING EVEN MATTER SO MUCH...

...YOU'RE WILLING TO TAKE US *ALL* DOWN WITH YOU?

WE'RE TAKING SOME *FLAK!*

EH. THIS OL' WARHORSE HAS TAKEN WORSE. DOUBLECROSS, IN YOUR OWN TIME...

YEAH, YEAH. CAN'T RUSH PERFECTION...

AH, GOTCHA *ALL.* BLANKET DISPERSAL...

"...LET 'EM *RIP*, BOYS."

SHA-WAAM

GALAAASH

FWTOOOM

GRIMLOCK...

THDDAMM

...YOU'RE UP.

NO *WAY* I CAN LET THIS GO.

WITH YOU, WITHOUT YOU...

...THERE'LL BE A *RECKONING!*

Y'KNOW, WHY EVEN FIGHT IT?

I'D RATHER GO DOWN HERE, BRAWLING, THAN KEEP ON CHASING A MYTH OF WHAT WAS... AND CAN LIKELY *NEVER* BE AGAIN!

FELLOW DYNOBOTS—IT'S BEEN AN *HONOR* AND A PRIVILEGE...

HEY...

KRUMFF

...WE *AIN'T* DEAD YET!

WHY ISN'T THIS *OVER* ALREADY? YOU, RESTORE THE NEURAL CLAMPS ON THE DYNOBOTS.

I... CAN'T.

THE IMPLANTS *AREN'T* RESPONDING.

AND I *KEEP* UNDERESTIMATING YOU...

VERY WELL. MUCH AS I PREFER TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE...

...I CAN SEE I'M GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS *PERSONALLY.*

I... HURT SO MUCH...

...I *MUST* BE ALIVE. AND...

...MAYBE, JUST MAYBE...

...KICKING...

STAY TIGHT. STAY FOCUSED. GO ***THROUGH*** THE GREATEST MASS.

WHERE IT'S STRONGEST...

...IT'S ***WEAKEST***. WE KNOW THE THEORY. YOU PRACTICALLY FORCE-FED IT TO US. NOW WE SEE IF IT HOLDS.

SO FAR, SO GOOD. BUT THIS, RELATIVELY SPEAKING, IS THE EASY BIT.

WHUUUF

YEAH, THERE'S ***STILL*** SCORPONOK. HE WON'T SIT BACK AND LET US JUST TEAR DOWN HIS FLEDGLING EMPIRE. HOW DO WE FIGHT ***HIM***?

FHOW

HHT! AT THIS RATE... BAD LANGUAGE MIGHT BE OUR ONLY OPTION.

ZZIF

LEAVE SCORPONOK TO ME.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

NO. WE DO THIS TOGETHER OR NOT AT ALL. RISE OR FALL, LIVE OR DIE...

VAARK

"...WE'RE DYNOBOTS TO THE BITTER END."

LISTEN, SUNSTREAKER, I'M SORRY. CHANCES ARE YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT.

BUT... WHAT I DO NOW I DO BECAUSE I'M OUT OF OPTIONS, AND MAYBE SO ARE YOU.

CLICK

WHAT WAS IT YOU SAID? EVERY MOMENT, A LITTLE BIT OF ME DIES?

IT'S BETTER THIS WAY.

SKARD

WHAT THE—

DUNT

DUNT

DUNT

DUNT

WHAT... JUST... HAPPENED?

I SUSPECT...

...SUNSTREAKER PULLED THE *PLUG* ON HIMSELF.

HUH?

IT'S... *COMPLICATED.*

HOW ABOUT THAT? WE *WON!* WE ACTUALLY—

ZKK-TAAK

SLUDGE?

MY EMPIRE LIES IN RUINS... BECAUSE OF *YOU!*

BUT THERE'S ALWAYS REVENGE. SWEET, LANGOROUS *REVENGE.*

YES!

BUT IT SHALL BE *MINE*.

SHOCKWAVE?

OH BROTHER!

"FOUND YOU. AT *LAST*."

THIS TIME, SCORPONOK...

...ONLY *ONE* OF US WALKS AWAY.

A-101-101

CHAPTER 5

DALLAS, TEXAS:

SLUDGE.

LOYAL. RESOLUTE. DEPENDABLE.

DEAD.

BECAUSE OF *ME.*

GRIMLOCK!

UNLESS YOU WANT TO *JOIN* HIM... *MOVE!*

UF!

WARK

YOU HAVE RUINED *EVERYTHING.*

BUT... I HAVE MOVED ON BEFORE, BEGUN ANEW, AND I WILL DO SO AGAIN.

AFTER I REDUCE YOU TO SUBATOMIC OBLIVION.

KLM

I TOLD YOU, *SCORPONOK*-CEASE AND DESIST.

VENGEANCE WILL BE MINE AND *MINE ALONE!*

KLM

"AW, GEE..."

KK-TAAA

...ISN'T IT GREAT TO BE *SO* IN-DEMAND?

SEE, GENERALLY IT'S EASIER KEEPIN' TAGS ON WHO WE *HAVEN'T* TICKED OFF.

IT'S THE DYNOBOT WAY.

"VENGEANCE"? WHAT DO *YOU* KNOW OF VENGEANCE, *SHOCKWAVE?*

I ALWAYS THOUGHT SUCH EMOTIONAL VAGARIES WERE ALIEN TO YOU.

I... LEARNED.

EVOLVED.

A NEW SUB-ROUTINE, BIRTHED IN COMBAT...

...FORGED IN *FIRE.*

KHUUUSH

THIS IS OUR CHANCE. WHILE THEY'RE BUSY FIGURING OUT WHOSE *GRUDGE* IS BIGGER...

...WE SLIP AWAY.

NO.

NO?

OKAY, LOOK– SLUDGE GOT HIS CIRCUITS CRISPY FRIED, SURE, BUT THAT GOES WITH THE TERRITORY. WE DON'T *DO* RECRIMINATIONS AND WE NEVER, EVER...

...GET ALL "BAND OF BROTHERS."

I KNOW, *SNARL*, I KNOW.

MORE'S THE PITY.

BECAUSE IF WE DID, THIS MIGHT ACTUALLY *MEAN* SOMETHING.

INSTEAD IT'S JUST ANOTHER MEANINGLESS STATISTIC IN A MISERABLE EXCUSE FOR A LIFE. EVERYTHING I'VE EVER DONE HAS AMOUNTED TO EXACTLY *NOTHING*. IN THE PAST, I'VE GOT BY ON BAD ATTITUDE ALONE, BUT SUDDENLY I FIND...

...IT'S JUST *NOT* ENOUGH.

YOU GO. TAKE THE OTHERS WITH YOU.

I'M SEEING THIS ONE THROUGH TO THE *BITTER END*! IT MAY BE LONG OVERDUE BUT I'M FINALLY TAKING RESPONSIBILITY.

OR IS IT?

LET'S GO. SIGNAL *REPUGNUS*. HAVE HIM PICK US UP AT THE RENDEZVOUS POINT.

GRIMLOCK?

NO. HE'S HAVING WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL...

"...AN ACCOUNTABLE MOMENT."

COMIN' WITH US?

THANKS, BUT I'VE SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF MY *OWN*.

LOOK AT YOURSELF, *HOT ROD*. YOU'RE NOT IN ANY MUCH SHAPE FOR A FIGHT.

I KNOW. YOU'RE SMART TO CUT AND RUN, *SLAG*. SMARTER THAN ME!

I LET THIS GET *PERSONAL!*

I-40 (EASTBOUND):

AGENT RED, WE HAVE A CONFIRMATION FROM OUR *OREGON* FIELD UNIT...

...*SEEKERS* ONE AND TWO HAVE BEEN RE-ACQUIRED AT THE EXACT COORDINATES SHOCKWAVE SUPPLIED.

STATUS?

SKYWATCH OPS-COMMAND/ MOBILE UNIT.

"FULLY IMMOBILIZED. HIGHER FUNCTIONS OFFLINE."

TWO DOWN.

WHAT'S THE LATEST FROM DALLAS?

SHOCKWAVE HAS ENGAGED AN UNIDENTIFIED MECHA IN THE EPSILON COMPOUND IN IRVING.

THE FIRST TWENTY-FOUR HOUR PERIOD IS ALMOST UP. SHOULD I TRANSMIT THE *DISARM* CODE?

HOLD OFF TILL THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT. I WANT THEM *ALL*, A CLEAN SWEEP. IF IT'S DONE, LET THE CRANIAL CHARGE DETONATE, IF NOT... RESET.

DALLAS:

TAKE IT! TAKE... EVERYTHING! WHATEVER I AM, THE ENTIRETY OF ME... IT'S ALL *YOURS*!

LIVE, DAMN YOU...

...*LIVE*!

THIS *HEADMASTER* PROCESS...

...INCREASES YOUR REACTION TIME BY—*UH*—APPROXIMATELY SIXTY PERCENT. BUT—

ZZAP

—THE ORGANIC CONTAMINENT KNOWS *FEAR*, REDUCING YOUR OVERALL OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY BY POINT-THREE OF A PERCENT.

ENOUGH, BY MY CALCULATIONS, TO MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VICTORY...

...AND *DEFEAT.*

HG—

—UGHHHN!

I... AM... MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU...

I... WILL...

YIELD.

AT THIS DISTANCE, A FOCUSED ION BLAST WILL PENETRATE EVEN YOUR ARMOR PLATING. THE CREATURE AT THE HEART OF YOU WILL PERISH.

AS I HAVE NO OVERRIDING IMPERATIVE TO TRUNCATE YOUR EXISTENCE IT WOULD BE LOGICAL TO STAND DOWN YOUR WEAPONS SYSTEMS *IMMEDIATELY.*

AS YOU SAY...

...LOGICAL.

NOTHING.

I ASSUME YOU HAVE AN EXIT STRATEGY.

OF COURSE.

THEN *USE* IT.

NO!

MAY NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SAVE SLUDGE...

...BUT I CAN STILL *AVENGE* HIM.

NOT TODAY.

NO!

NO-NO-NO-NO!

TEN THOUSAND, THREE HUNDRED AND NINETY-SIX YEARS, TWO MONTHS, AND THREE DAYS.

THAT IS WHAT YOU COST ME. THAT IS THE DEBT.

YEAH? WELL, THE HUMANS HAVE AN EXPRESSION...

...PAYBACK'S A BITCH!

00: 12: 12

SLAM

ARK

GZZZ-KK!

EARLIER...

YOU UNDERSTAND, *SOUNDWAVE*, TIMING IS EVERYTHING.

OF *COURSE*. JUST MAKE VERY SURE THAT WHILE I AM *CLONING* THE SKYWATCH DISARM CODE YOU ARE SIMULTANEOUSLY MAKING GOOD ON YOUR END OF THE BARGAIN.

YES. IRONIC, ISN'T IT?

THAT YOU FIND YOURSELF *LOCKED* IN THIS MOST LIMITED ALT. MODE, COURTESY OF A WEAPON DESIGNED BY *ME*.

BUT NO MATTER. SOON, *BOTH* OF US...

NOW.

"...SHALL BE *WHOLE* AGAIN."

DUE EAST:

JUST THE THREE OF YOU, HUH?

LOOKS THAT WAY, DOESN'T IT?

OH WELL.

WHAT ARE YOU *WAITING* FOR? AN INVITATION?

FACE IT-YOU, US-WE'RE A GOOD FIT, ALL REBELS WITHOUT A CAUSE. WE BELIEVE IN JUST THREE THINGS...

...*ME, MYSELF,* AND I.

MACHINATION CENTRAL:

WOW.

THAT IS *UGLY.*

H-HOT ROD?

IS-IS THAT REALLY YOU?

ER. *HUNTER*, RIGHT? BUT WHERE'S—

N-NO TIME TO EXPLAIN. THIS IS SCORPONOK. *ALL* OF HIM! SEE THOSE... THEY'RE WHAT'S KEEPING HIM ALIVE... FUNCTIONAL... WHATEVER THE RIGHT TERMINOLOGY IS, I...

EASY, HUNTER. I *GET* IT.

STAND BACK. ONE GOOD SWING AND THIS'LL ALL BE—

OVER.

NO-N—

—UHHHN!

FORTH

KRASK

EVERYONE AGREED?

YEP. THIS MAY NOT BE *MUCH* OF A CAUSE, BUT IT'LL HAVE TO DO. MONSTERBOTS WE ARE NOT.

S'RIGHT.

ER, GUYS...

...WHAT'S GOIN' ON?

SLUDGE?

SSKVAK

KRUNCH

DYNOBOTS...

...LET'S FINISH WHAT *HE* STARTED!

WHAT?

NO! GET SCORPONOK BEFORE HE ESCAPES...

KHOT

NNF!

SKUHK

GET ME *UP* THERE. I WANT TO SEE THIS FIRST-HAND.

00:00:30

AGENT RED. THIRTY SECONDS AND COUNTING...

...DO I TRANSMIT?

SEND THE DISARM CODE.

INTERCEPTION SUCCESSFUL. DECRYPTION PROCESS UNDERWAY...

...I *HAVE* IT.

RELAY THE DISARM CODE.

TO UNLOCK YOUR PRIMARY TRANSFORMATION COG INITIATE A SUB-PROCESSOR SIX WIPE...

...AND *REBOOT!*

YES. YES. AT LAST, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS...

...FREEDOM!

RAVAGE, LASERBEAK...

...AWAKEN!

OUR BRIEF PARTNERSHIP IS CONCLUDED, SOUNDWAVE. AND SO...

...IS THIS CHARADE.

CRASH!

CHARADE?

I CARE NOTHING FOR THIS INCONSEQUENTIAL DUEL, GRIMLOCK. HERE, TODAY, IT SERVED A PURPOSE. BUT NOW I SAY...

...LET IT *END.*

IF YOU FOLLOW ME, OR PERSIST IN HARASSING ME, I WILL KILL YOU. STAY OUT OF MY AFFAIRS AND—

NEVER.

THIS ONLY ENDS...

...*ONE* WAY!

WHAT...

...HAVE YOU *DONE*?

WHAT I DO BEST.

WHOOM

BELOW:

I SHALL AT LEAST TAKE WITH ME THE SLIGHT BUT SWEET SATISFACTION...

...OF SQUEEZING THE LIFE FROM YOU.

SCORPONOK!

YOU MESSED WITH THE DYNOBOTS. THAT'S ***NEVER*** A GOOD MOVE.

HALFWITS. YOU SHOULD HAVE RUN WHEN YOU HAD THE CHANCE.

THE HEAD! TARGET THE ***HEAD!***

WOW...

...THAT IS ***UGLY.***

EEEUUUGH!

WORKS FOR ME.

FINISH IT! HE DESERVES TO DIE.

NO.

THAT'S *NOT* THE WAY THIS GOES. SCORPONOK WILL ANSWER FOR HIS MANY CRIMES...

...ACCORDING TO THE LETTER OF INTERGALACTIC LAW!

ULTRA MAGNUS?

MY MESSAGE GOT THROUGH. YOU CAME.

ER, YOU HERE FOR HIM?

OR *US?*

I THINK...

...WE SHOULD *PURGE* THIS ENTIRE FACILITY, GATHER UP ANY AND ALL HYBRIDS AFFILIATED WITH SCORPONOK, AND GET AS FAR AWAY FROM THIS PLANET AS *SOON* AS POSSIBLE.

UM...

"...SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN."

ARK-32 (THREE DAYS LATER):

IS HE *ALIVE?*

HE IS. BADLY TRAUMATISED AND IN NEED OF A LOT OF C.R.* TIME, BUT HE'LL MEND.

THOUGH PHYSICALLY SEPARATED, SUNSTREAKER'S *SPARK* SUSTAINED HIM...

*CRYOGENIC REGENERATION

AND ME? AM I—? ARE WE—?

WELL, I'VE BEEN ABLE TO DAMP DOWN THE POSITRONIC FEED SO YOU DON'T *KEEP* THINKING HIS THOUGHTS, BUT... I SIMPLY DON'T KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT THE TECHNOLOGY TO RISK REMOVING YOUR IMPLANTS.

STRANGE. IT'S LIKE, HALF OF ME IS...

...MISSING. I'M...

...NOT EVEN SURE WHO I *AM* ANYMORE.

YOU'RE OUR FRIEND...

WELCOME BACK, HUNTER.

VERITY! JIMMY!

HEY, BUD. HEAR YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH SOME CHANGES.

LIKE YOU WOULDN'T -*HH*- BELIEVE.

I SHOULD BE GOING.

I DID WHAT I COULD ON EARTH, BUT THERE'S AN OUTFIT CALLED SKYWATCH THAT SEEMS TO KNOW *ALL* ABOUT US.

YES. WE'RE WELL AND TRULY COMPROMISED. FOR NOW...

"...LET'S JUST HOPE THEY BELIEVE *ALL* COMBATANTS PERISHED IN THAT EXPLOSION."

THANKS IN NO SMALL PART TO YOU...

...I NOW HAVE SCORPONOK *AND* SHOCKWAVE IN CUSTODY. I'LL SEE IT GOES SOME WAY TO OFFSETTING YOUR *OWN* SENTENCE.

FORGET ME. JUST AS LONG AS WE'RE CLEAR: THE DECISION TO GO AFTER SHOCKWAVE IN THE FIRST PLACE WAS *MINE*.

THE BUCK STOPS HERE.

WARRANTS ON THE OTHER DYNOBOTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN CANCELED.

Y'KNOW, WHAT I CAN'T FIGURE ABOUT YOUR LOT IS, ARE YOU TOO TOUGH OR JUST TOO *STUBBORN* TO DIE?

BOTH.

SLUDGE.

LOYAL. RESOLUTE. DEPENDABLE.

ALIVE.

BECAUSE OF ME.

THE END.

ART GALLERY

Art by Nick Roche : colors by Josh Burcham

Art by Marcelo Matere : color assist by Priscilla Tramontano

THE TRANSFORMERS™

ALL HAIL MEGATRON

Art by Nick Roche : colors by Josh Burcham

Art by Marcelo Matere : color assist by Priscilla Tramontano

Art by Nick Roche : colors by Josh Burcham

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Art by Nick Roche

DINOBOT SIZE COMPARISON CHART

SLUDGE

GRIMLOCK

SLAG

SNARL

SWOOP

MAX DINOS

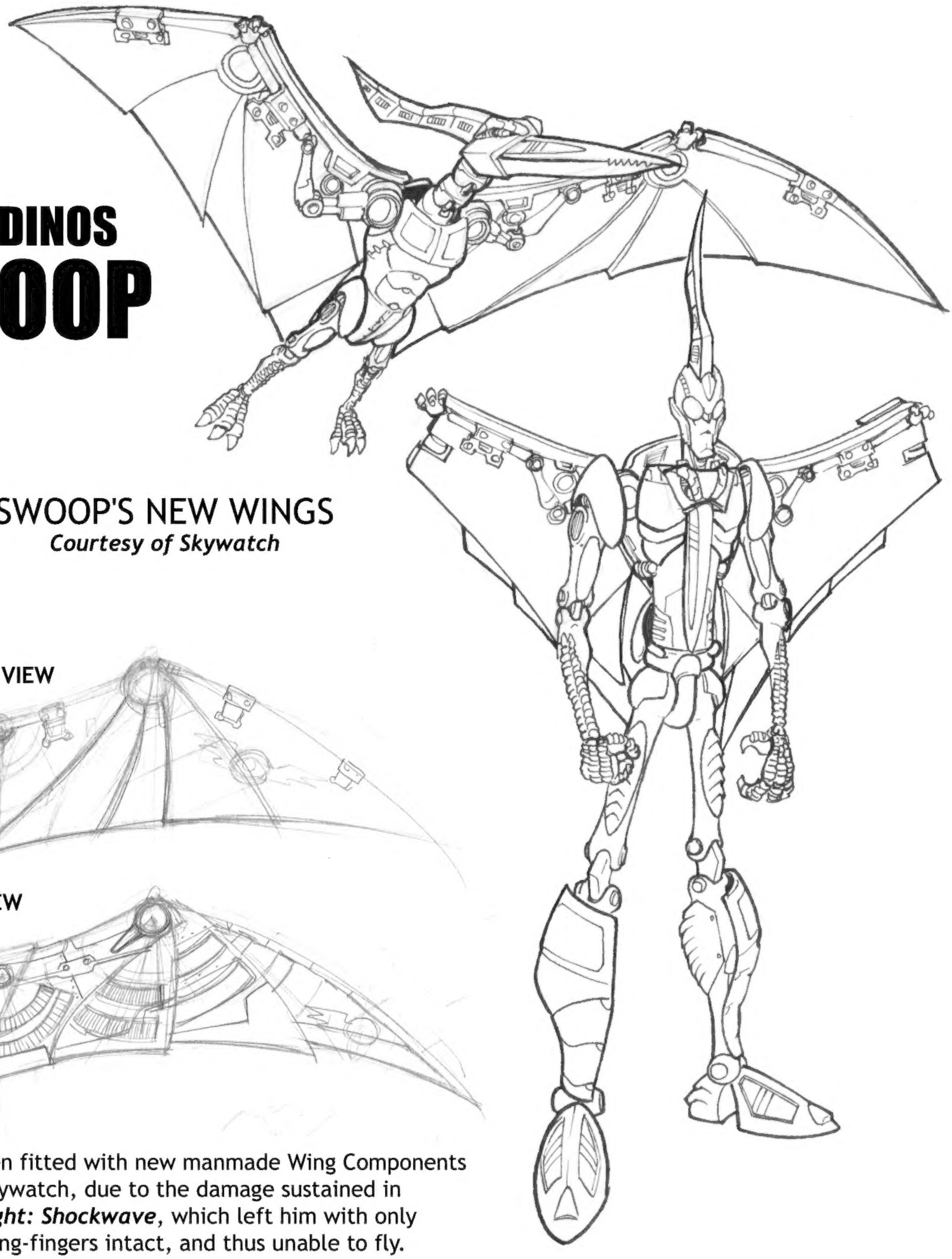
GRIMLOCK

Art by Nick Roche

MAX DINOS
SLUDGE

Art by Nick Roche

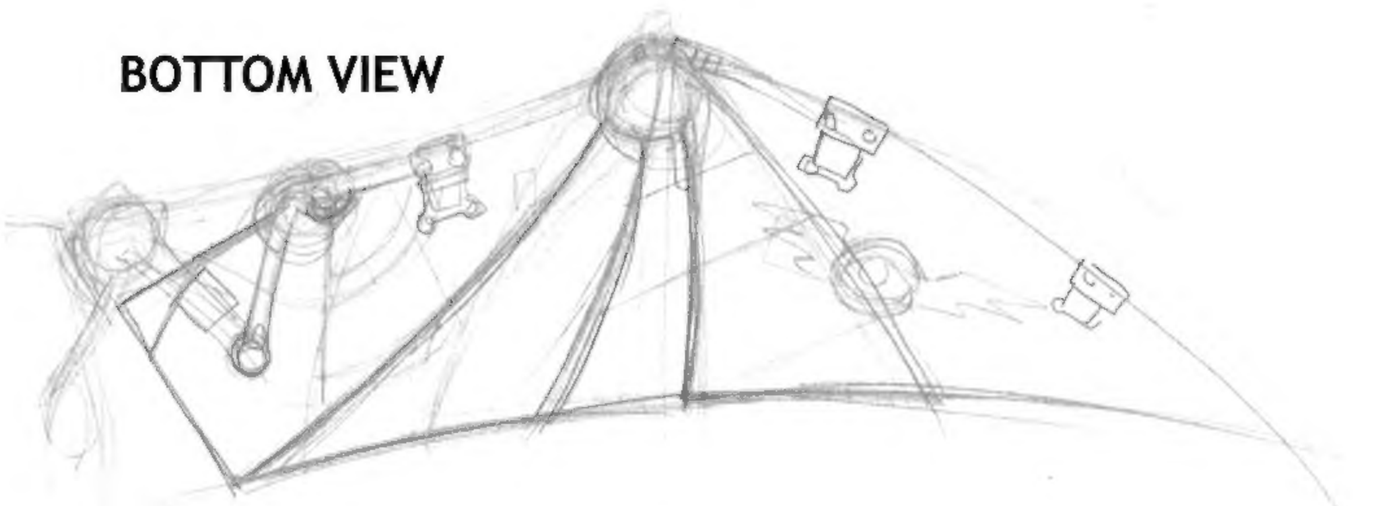
MAX DINOS
SWOOP



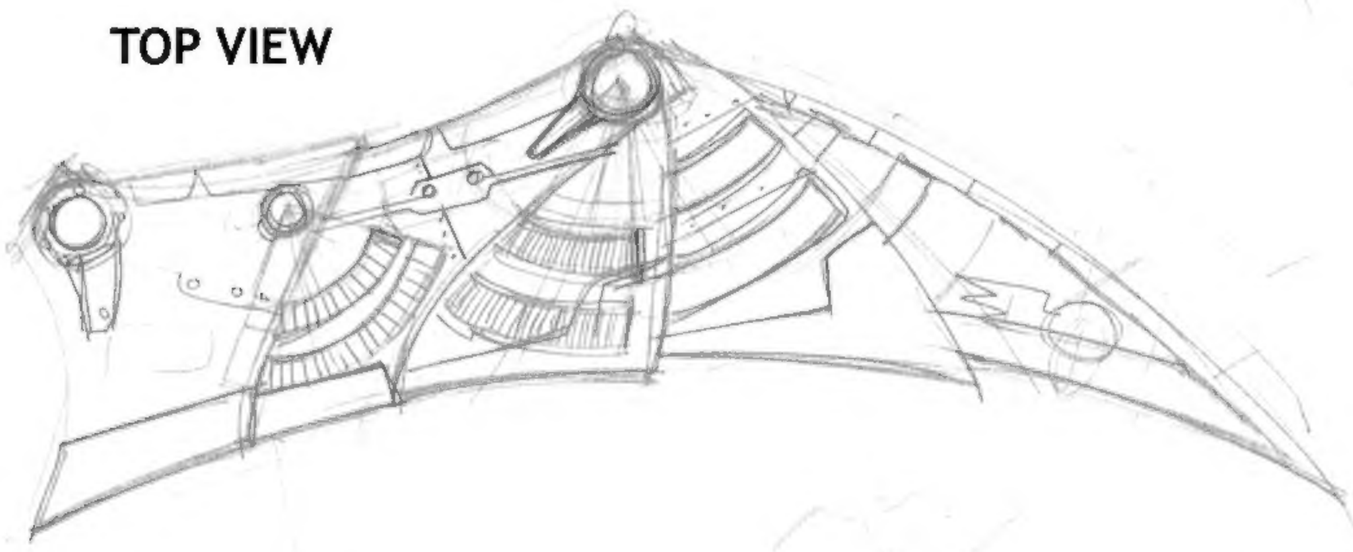
SWOOP'S NEW WINGS

Courtesy of Skywatch

BOTTOM VIEW



TOP VIEW



Swoop's been fitted with new manmade Wing Components by Skywatch, due to the damage sustained in ***Spotlight: Shockwave***, which left him with only his wing-fingers intact, and thus unable to fly.

Art by Nick Roche

THE TRANSFORMERS
MAXIMUM DINOBOTS

With DECEPTICON scientist SCORPONOK on the threshold of world domination, only the elite AUTOBOT team of DINOBOTS can possibly stand in his way!

But even if DINOBOT leader GRIMLOCK can reunite with his team, they still must settle their differences before they have a chance to prevail over the evil scientist and his army of HEADMASTERS. And what roles do SUNSTREAKER, HOT ROD, SHOCKWAVE, and the MONSTERBOTS play in this intrigue?

Find out inside! The TRANSFORMERS legend continues courtesy of **Simon Furman**, **Nick Roche**, and **James Raiz**!

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